

My Opening Presentation

SLIDE 1

Good morning. I would like to welcome all of you to this Conference on USAID's African Partnership in Biotechnology. I would like to thank the staff of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, both the Ibadan and Kampala offices, who have worked very hard to organize this conference on behalf of USAID.

Before beginning with the scheduled program, I would first like to go over what we consider the goals and objectives of this particular conference. It will be very important that we keep these objectives in mind as we hear presentations and engage in discussion over the next two and a half days on a wide variety of topics related to biotechnology for Africa and that we continuously refer back to these as we develop ideas.

SLIDE 2

- ◆ Our first major objective is determine where we want to end up with biotechnology in Africa. To do this, we must be asking ourselves at all times, where are we going.
- ◆ Our goal is to continue developing a common vision for harnessing agricultural biotechnology in Africa. One that we all contribute to and benefit from.

- ◆ We need to know how to promote this vision. This requires identifying specific opportunities and considering how they help us do that.
- ◆ Figuring out where we are going with biotechnology will require knowing how to measure the impacts of biotechnology activities, knowing when priorities are changing and how to change those priorities, and identifying opportunities encountered along the way. Doing so is vital to knowing what progress we are making. These impacts, priorities, and opportunities refer not just to technology, but also to agriculture, policy, communication, trade, and economics which all effect the development of biotechnology.

SLIDE 3

Our related objective is to find out how to realize the vision we agree to.

- ◆ We need to look at the approaches that we currently are using to link leaders in Africa at the national and regional level with international partners. We must carefully consider whether what we are currently doing fits within the vision we have and seek out new approaches that support that vision.
- ◆ There are many activities going on. We need to give partners the ability to find the complementarities between what they are doing and what others are doing and to leverage those for mutual gain. This is essential for developing an integrated vision.

- ◆ We need your input on the current strategy USAID has for biotechnology in Africa. We need you to identify the gaps or missing parts in the strategy and to identify areas that could be changed. More than just identifying these gaps, we need your solutions for improving the overall strategy.

SLIDE 4

What we are hoping to achieve with all this input are stronger and better partnerships, at all levels of partnerships.

- ◆ Stronger partnerships will mean we maintain a continual process of consultation among our diverse groups of partners.
- ◆ It will mean we have a common understanding of priorities for biotechnology in Africa. It is clear that any one institution or set of institutions in a partnership cannot work towards all priorities at the same time. There are too many. Each collaboration must decide what its best opportunities are and be strategic in its choices.
- ◆ Finally, healthy, effective partnerships will emphasize discussion and substantial interaction. Their long-term success depends.

With that, I'll end. I wish you all a productive and enjoyable time at this conference.